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CIA MAY GET NEW POWERS TO GRANT CITIZENSHIP TO SPIES  
BY LANCE GAY  
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@WASHINGTON \_ Legislation pending in Congress would allow CIA Director William Casey to grant American citizenship to as many as 10 foreign spies each year in secret ceremonies.<

The Senate attached the measure to the House-passed 1986 intelligence authorization bill which is now in a House-Senate conference committee.<

Neither Senate Intelligence Committee aides nor CIA officials would comment on why the changes in current immigration laws are needed or what types of foreign agent would be secretly given U.S. citizenship.<

"It's a relatively sensitive issue," said Intelligence Committee spokesman David Holliday.<

"Basically, there are a certain class of people with whom the United States has dealings that we feel deserve to have citizenship without having to go through the current regulations," he said. "These are a specialized class of folks."<

The proposed law would allow the CIA director to grant citizenship to 10 foreign agents each year who have made an "extraordinary contribution to the national security of the United States or to the conduct of United States intelligence activities."<

Under the measure the CIA, in consultation with the attorney general and commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, would be able to waive the waiting period and bypass normal INS requirements that immigrants applying for citizenship be residents of the federal court district where they are sworn in.<

The proposal allows naturalization papers for the new secret citizens to be filed in any federal court. "They will not be made public," said Holliday.<

Casey would be required to inform congressional intelligence and judiciary committees each time a new citizen is secretly sworn in.<

Holliday declined to say whether changes in the INS law would allow the CIA to secretly grant citizenship to agents still working in foreign countries.<

"The descriptions are very well spelled out in the law, let's let it go at that," he said.<

A CIA spokeswoman said the provisions would bring only minor changes to current procedures.<

In the past, foreign agents and defectors have been given new identities and allowed to become American citizens if they chose through regular INS procedures that protected their real identities.<

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(Lance Gay covers Congress for Scripps Howard News Service.)<  
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